

VZCZCXRO3382
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHRO #0046/01 0091655
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 091655Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6882
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0288
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 1709
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1316
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 4314
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2181
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY 0041
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 2036
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 8179
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 2174
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 4462
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2835
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0690
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0375

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000046

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [SR](#) [YI](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: ITALY FULLY SUPPORTS AHTISAARI, CONTACT GROUP ON
KOSOVO

ROME 00000046 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Classified by David D. Pearce, Political Minister Counse
lor, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

- - - -

¶1. (C) MFA DG for European Affairs Laura Mirachian says Italy is fully onboard with the Contact Group's support of UNOSEK Ahtisaari. She stated that there is broad bipartisan and expert consensus in supporting Kosovar "delinkage" from Serbia and a NATO and EU future for all the countries of the region. Italy expects Ahtisaari's report to be made the first week of February followed by Contact Group consultation on the way forward and a UNSC discussion to follow shortly afterward - before the formation of a new Serbian government.

Based on her recent visit to Moscow with FM D'Alema, and their meeting with President Putin, Mirachian thought the Russians would seek to limit the scope of any resolution but would ultimately not block the process from moving forward. She agreed on the need for close coordination between the US and EU on the issue of recognition and asked that the US remain engaged through KFOR and in the civilian implementation process. Italy remains concerned about the long-term stability of the region and the effects of organized crime and trafficking if the international community does not maintain a strong presence in Kosovo for some time. End summary.

Italian Consensus on Way Forward

- - - - -

¶2. (C) Mirachian told PolMinCouns that Italy believed the Contact Group has been successful in bringing stability to the Western Balkans and saw the Kosovo status process as one of the final steps needed to bring this period of history to an end. Mirachian added that the final status process needed to be taken in concert with a regional approach to EU and NATO integration in order to avoid any further instability.

She noted that there is bipartisan and expert support for this vision of the Balkans and she expected full support from the FM and PM in moving ahead on Kosovo's final status in concert with the rest of the Contact Group.

Italy Supports Ahtisaari, Some Concerns About Process

13. (C) Mirachian told PolMinCouns that Italy expected a fairly rapid timetable on Kosovo beginning with the presentation of Ahtisaari's report in early February. After that, she expects Contact Group consensus on moving Ahtisaari's recommendations to the UNSC. Based on her recent visit to Moscow with FM D'Alema, and their meeting with President Putin, Mirachian thought the Russians would seek to limit the scope of any resolution as much as possible, but would ultimately not block the process from moving forward. She suggested that Russia could try to leverage their cooperation in exchange for concessions on other issues. She said it was difficult to tell what those issues might be, but noted Russia's generally difficult relations with its newly independent neighbors, as well as territorial disputes in Transnistria, Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia and other areas. Mirachian said Italy's ties with Russia would be a priority concern for her, given the country's heavy dependence on Russian energy sources. Mirachian said Italy gets the vast majority of its energy supplies through "three doors" -- Russia, Iran, and Arab states in North Africa.

14. (C) She was most concerned about the Kosovo process after a potential UNSC resolution. Recognition could be a potential problem. Should the UNSC resolution fall short of the aspirations of the Kosovar Albanians, she feared a unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo.

ROME 00000046 002.2 OF 002

Alternatively, Serbs could create significant problems by rejecting the result. Therefore, close US-EU coordination on recognition would be crucial.

Long-term Worries about Kosovo

15. (C) Italy is concerned about both security and borders. Kosovo may not be prepared to combat the organized crime and trafficking problems that are likely to overwhelm its weak institutions, and this could have a spillover effect here. Therefore, Italy will insist on an intrusive international presence in the areas of security and rule of law for some time after the decision. Mirachian noted that Italy will propose an Italian judge to head any international oversight of the ROL program to ensure that its concerns are being met. Additionally, Mirachian urged the US to remain involved both in a future KFOR and in the civilian development through some sort of steering group.

16. (C) Another issue is whether pan-Albanian and pan-Serbian nationalist movements would push for redrawing borders. Other countries in the region, including Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Macedonia had expressed similar concerns. Italy therefore favored PfP and SAA for the entire region, including Serbia. Such agreements would provide the governments of the region a strong message that the EU and NATO were pushing for those particular nations with those specific borders to become part of the trans-Atlantic community. She noted, however, that other major EU nations such as France and Germany felt less urgency than the immediate neighbors, and more affected by enlargement fatigue.

Comment

¶7. (C) Mirachian has extensive experience on Balkans issues and she will be an influential voice in determining Italy's Balkan policies. Her vision for Kosovo tracks closely with ours on both the timing and the eventual outcome of the process. Italy's concerns about Kosovo are less about the final status or how we get there and more about the international community's follow-through on security and border issues after a status decision.
SPOLGI